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RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 4469
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RHMFISS/EUCOM POLAD VAIHINGEN GE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1109
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 000254

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AF/S FOR S. HILL
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU
ADDIS ABABA FOR ACSS
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR E. LOKEN AND L. DOBBINS
STATE PASS TO NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR B. PITTMAN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/01/2018

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [ZI](#)

SUBJECT: ZANU-PF PLANS VOTE-RIGGED VICTORY OR COUP

REF: HARARE 252 AND PREV.

Classified By: Ambassador James D. McGee for reason 1.4 (d)

1. (C) SUMMARY. Two contacts with direct access to the ZANU-PF security apparatus told us the night of March 31 that ZANU-PF is in the process of rigging the election and will have the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) announce that President Robert Mugabe has won reelection with over 51 percent of the vote. An announcement is planned this morning (April 1). If this plan is thwarted, the ruling party intends to declare a state of emergency to prevent a Morgan Tsvangirai victory. In an effort to preempt MufvQ/-Rhe ZANU-PF plot. Separately, the Zimbabwe Election

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Support Network (ZESN) announced results of a parallel vote count. Based on a sample of 435 polling stations, ZESN stated that Tsvangirai's projected vote was over 49 percent with Mugabe winning 42 percent. The margin of error was about 2.5 percent. END SUMMARY.

2. (C) We spoke separately the evening of March 31 with a businessman with ties to the ruling party who has contacts within the ZANU-PF security apparatus, and with ZANU-PF dissident Ibbo Mandaza who is a close ally of Simba Makoni. Mandaza has close Central Intelligence Organization (CIO) contacts who are opposed to Mugabe. Both the businessman and Mandaza related consistent versions of a ZANU-PF plot.

3. (C) According to both of our contacts, Mugabe's inner circle became aware early on in the vote-counting process that Mugabe was losing and that Tsvangirai would probably win over 50 percent of the vote. Individuals who are part of this coterie are Defense Chief Constantine Chiwenga, Police Commissioner Augustine Chichuri, Minister of State Security Didymus Mutasa, Minister of Labor Nicholas Goche, Minister of Justice Patrick Chinimasa, CIO Director Happyton Bonyongwe, and presidential spokesperson George Chy?QQ}xZ{with what they believed to be the actual results. Instead of Tsvangirai receiving over 50 percent of the votes, he would receive slightly less and Mugabe would receive a little over 40 percent. This would create a runoff and would be acceptable to ZANU-PF officials who are anti-Mugabe. They concluded, however, that Mugabe would lose a runoff. They then decided to rig to give Mugabe 51.6 percent. We understand there are plans to announce this result today. Our contacts told us that to carry out the plan, the group has established a command center which is dictating results to the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC). If the rigging plan was thwarted, they planned a state of emergency, and ultimately a coup against Tsvangirai if he somehow became president.

5. (C) Mandaza said he met with MDC officials yesterday morning and informed them of the plot. TPq.Q1Q_w/
Tsvangirai was to make the announcement--he has not been

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visible since the election, reportedly because of security concerns--and possibly expose the ZANU-PF plot. For unknown reasons, the MDC decided not to hold a press conference. One

is now scheduled for this morning.

16. (C) Separately, ZESN last night announced results of its parallel vote count. Based on a sampling of 435 polling

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stations, ZESN projected that Tsvangirai would win 49.4 percent of the vote, Mugabe would win 41.8 percent, and Makoni would win 8.2 percent. The margin of error for Tsvangirai was 2.4 percent, for Mugabe 2.6 percent, and for

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Makoni 1.1 percent. In a press conference where the results were presented, ZESN urged the ZEC to make public the polling station results which, according to the Electoral Act, were required to be posted outside polling stations on completion of counting.

COMMENT

17. (C) Armed with information, the MDC has dallied, and it appears ZANU-PF will take advantage of the MDC's failure to act. All signs point to Mugabe seizing the initiative and declaring victory today. END COMMENT.

MCGEE